



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

P.O. Box 42560 • Olympia, Washington 98504-2560 • (360) 902-1800

Compost, vermicompost, compost tea and processed manure approved for use under the National Organic Program

The National Organic Program restricts the use of compost and animal manure on organic farms. The following list describes compost and animal manure that is compliant with National Organic Program.

1. Compost composed of plant material. There are no restrictions on the use of composted or uncomposted plant residues.
2. Compost approved under NOP 205.203(c). Compost feedstocks must have an initial carbon to nitrogen ratio of between 25:1 and 40:1. In-vessel or static aerated piles must be maintained at a temperature of between 131 and 170 degrees Fahrenheit for 3 days. Windrow composting systems must be maintained at a temperature of between 131 and 170 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 days and turned a minimum of 5 times.
3. Aerobically digested compost. Must meet the following criteria:
 - a) It is made from only allowed feedstock materials including manure, plant residues, food waste, food processing waste, and other natural materials,
 - b) The compost undergoes an increase in temperature to at least 131° F (55°C) and remains there for a minimum of 3 days, and
 - c) The compost pile is mixed or managed to ensure that all of the feedstock heats to the minimum temperature. The monitoring of the above parameters must be documented in the Organic System Plan (plan) submitted by the producer and verified during the site visit.
4. Vermicompost. Must meet the following criteria:
 - a) Made from only allowed feedstock materials, except for incidental residues that will not lead to contamination,
 - b) Aerobic activity is maintained by regular additions of thin layers of organic matter at 1-3 day intervals,
 - c) Moisture is maintained at 70-90%, and
 - d) Duration of vermicomposting is at least 12 months for outdoor windrows, 4 months for indoor container systems, 4 months for angled wedge systems, or 60 days for continuous flow reactors.
5. Compost tea. Compost tea that is made from approved compost is acceptable for organic crop production. The addition of sugar or molasses to compost tea is acceptable. Sugar and molasses are not of animal origin and not restricted under NOP 205.203(c)(1).
6. Processed manure. Manure that has been heated to a temperature in excess of 150° F (65°C) for one hour or more and dried to a moisture level of 12% or less, or an equivalent heating and drying process that produces a product that is negative for pathogenic contamination by salmonella and fecal coliform material is approved for organic use.
7. Raw manure. Uncomposted animal manure that does not meet the above criteria may be used in organic crop production if applied more than 90 days prior to the harvest of crops that are not in contact with the soil or more than 120 days prior to the harvest of crops that are in contact with the soil.

Clopyralid

Clopyralid is a long-lasting herbicide used to control broadleaf weeds. It passes through animals and the composting process with little degradation. The fact that it doesn't break down presents a problem for compost and manure. Compost contaminated with clopyralid may harm certain types of broadleaf plants such as beans, peas, sunflowers, peppers, tomatoes and potatoes.

Compost registered for use in organic crop production by WSDA

Compost that receives WSDA approval through the brand name material registration process must be clopyralid-free. Bioassays and analytical testing are required to verify that composts approved through the brand name material registration process are free of clopyralid residues.

Non-registered sources of compost and manure that are not on the WSDA Brand Name Materials List

Most compost and manure available to organic producers is not registered through the WSDA brand name material registration process. Non-registered composts and manures might fail to meet the zero tolerance standard for clopyralid. Many organic producers utilize non-registered composts and manures in order to meet their soil fertility and crop nutrient needs.

Organic producers are permitted to use compost and manure from non-registered sources as long as it meets the criteria on the previous page. Non-registered compost might contain clopyralid residues. Sensitive plants (legumes, composites, nightshades) may be damaged by clopyralid contaminated compost. There will be no effect on the organic certification status for organic producers that choose to use non-registered sources of compost and manure. It is permissible for organic producers to use non-registered compost that contains clopyralid residues. Use non-registered compost at your own risk.